

9-7-2001

21st-Century Crusades and Demonizing Islam: Commentary on Inderfuth

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Recommended Citation

Editor (2001) "21st-Century Crusades and Demonizing Islam: Commentary on Inderfuth," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*. Vol. 11 : Iss. 10 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol11/iss10/1>

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Title: 21st-Century Crusades and Demonizing Islam: Commentary on Inderfuth

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Volume: 11

Issue: 10

Date: 2001-09-07

Keywords: Human Rights, Inderfurth, Taliban

Abstract. This article comments on public discourse transmitted through Western-financed mass media that attempts to demonize variants of Islam--e.g., that of the Taliban.

According to a former United States State (US) Department official, the Taliban are egregiously violating human rights and are not acting according to tenets of Islam. However, one can make a strong case that the Taliban are not violating human rights, are acting in an Islamic fashion, and are living in a world that (via the Western mass media) is attempting to violate the human rights of all who are perceived as different--viz., the Other.

The former State Department official's case is made in the context of the Taliban seeking to prosecute foreign nationals for proselytizing Christianity and actually effecting religious conversion from Islam to Christianity. Given that the Taliban is seeking to create and maintain a nation-state based on a religious faith and vision, foreign proselytizers and those living within territory controlled by the Taliban who succumb to proselytization are living against the very Truth that forms a national essence. These people are respectively aiding and abetting high treason and committing high treason. Such treason is not necessarily covered by even the most expansive version of human rights.

The former US official's case is further made through pointing out that there are others who profess to be of the Islamic faith and who also profess the Taliban not to be acting according to Islam. These others are termed by the official to be "fellow Muslims," "Muslim states," "Muslim nations," "Islamic governments," "the Islamic world," "Muslim leaders," and "Muslim political and religious leaders." However, neither the fact that there is disagreement about what is Islamic nor that there are opponents among a majority of people self-labeled or other-labeled as Islamic necessarily makes a *prima facie* or any case against the Taliban not being Islamic.

In fact, the official's case and similar cases against the Taliban may be characterized as violating the Taliban's human rights. The substance of violation includes US and Western faith-based economic sanctions, diplomatic attacks, antiterrorist and counterterrorist initiatives, and the very mass-media activities that form the eyes on the world for much of the world and that are often the forges of identity. The rationale of violation seems to be an aversion to people who desire to live life (1) totally through a sacred modality and attempt to mean it; (2) totally outside of a consumer and materialist life space; and (3) totally against some notion of a liberal, representative democracy that in some ways reifies reason and logic to the exclusion of spiritual ontology.

So one is left with one totalistic system of thinking against another. One is of obvious material superiority that seems to include and exclude the spiritual as appropriate. The other seems to include only the spiritual, even as it also manifests corruptions of the material world that humans seem to find unavoidable. Upon closer examination, one might even find less that is not in common between the two systems. Each may be but a projected other of a secretly shared self. (See Battegay, R. (2000). Individual responsibility versus archaic group dynamics in national and international politics. *Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, 2, 5-15; Harkin, M. (1994). *Contested bodies: Affliction and power in*

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